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hurl back the invader, with readiness, address, and the least bloodshed. West Point must ever be the great mother of our future educational development in arms; while we cherish her, let us improve and increase her utility, and join to her elementary instruction such excellent schools of army practice as shall extend the knowledge of the art of war in America, and, by rendering us more formidable, diminish the chances of war.

We cannot close without thanking Captain Boynton for the vast amount of information so well collated in his book, and for his clear statement of the history and condition of the Academy from the beginning to the present time.

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ART. X. — *Letter of the Secretary of War, transmitting Report on the Organization of the Army of the Potomac, and of the Campaigns in Virginia and Maryland under the Command of Major-General George B. McClellan, from July 26, 1861, to November 7, 1862.* Washington: Government Printing-Office. 1864. 8vo. pp. 242.

WE can conceive of no object capable of rousing deeper sympathy than a defeated commander. Though the first movement of popular feeling may be one of wrathful injustice, yet, when the ebb of depression has once fairly run out, and confidence begins to set back, hiding again that muddy bed of human nature which such neap-tides are apt to lay bare, there is a kindly instinct which leads all generous minds to seek every possible ground of extenuation, to look for excuses in misfortune rather than incapacity, and to allow personal gallantry to make up, as far as may be, for want of military genius. There is no other kind of failure which comes so directly home to us, none which appeals to so many of the most deeply-rooted sentiments at once. Want of success in any other shape is comparatively a personal misfortune to the man himself who fails; but how many hopes, prides, sacrifices, and heroisms are centred in him who wields the embattled manhood of his country! An army is too multitudinous to call forth that personal enthusiasm which is a

necessity of the heart. The imagination needs a single figure which it can invest with all those attributes of admiration that become vague and pointless when divided among a host. Accordingly, we impersonate in the general, not only the army he leads, but whatever qualities we are proud of in the nation itself. He becomes for the moment the ideal of all masculine virtues, and the people are eager to lavish their admiration on him. His position gives him at a bound what other men must spend their lives in winning or vainly striving to win. If he gain a battle, he flatters that pride of prowess which, though it may be a fault of character in the individual man, is the noblest of passions in a people. If he lose one, we are all beaten with him, we all fall down with our Cæsar, and the grief glistens in every eye, the shame burns on every cheek. Moralize as we may about the victories of peace and the superiority of the goose-quill over the sword, there is no achievement of human genius on which a country so prides itself as on success in war, no disgrace over which it broods so insolently as military disaster.

There is nothing more touching than the sight of a nation in search of its great man, nothing more beautiful than its readiness to accept a hero on trust. Nor is this a feeble sentimentality. It is much rather a noble yearning of what is best in us, for it is only in these splendid figures which now and then sum up all the higher attributes of character, that the multitude of men can ever hope to find their blind instinct of excellence realized and satisfied. Not without reason are nations always symbolized as women, for there is something truly feminine in the devotion with which they are willing to give all for and to their ideal man, and the zeal with which they drape some improvised Agamemnon with all the outward shows of royalty from the property-room of imagination. This eagerness of loyalty toward first-rate character is one of the conditions of mastery in every sphere of human activity, for it is the stuff that genius works in. Heroes, to be sure, cannot be made to order, yet with a man of the right fibre, who has the stuff for greatness in him, the popular enthusiasm would go far toward making him in fact what he is in fancy. No commander ever had more of this paid-up capital of fortune,

this fame in advance, this success before succeeding, than General McClellan. That dear old domestic bird, the Public, which lays the golden eggs out of which greenbacks are hatched, was sure she had brooded out an eagle-chick at last. How we all waited to see him stoop on the dove-cote of Richmond! Never did nation give such an example of faith and patience as while the Army of the Potomac lay during all those weary months before Washington. Every excuse was invented, every palliation suggested, except the true one, that our chicken was no eagle, after all. He was hardening his serres, he was waiting for his wings to grow, he was whetting his beak, we should see him soar at last and shake the thunder from his wings. But do what we could, hope what we might, it became daily clearer that, whatever other excellent qualities he might have, this of being aquiline was wanting.

Disguise and soften it as we may, the campaign of the Peninsula was a disastrous failure, — a failure months long, like a bad novel in weekly instalments, with “To be continued” grimly ominous at the end of every part. So far was it from ending in the capture of Richmond, that nothing but the gallantry of General Pope and his little army hindered the Rebels from taking Washington. And now comes Major-General George B. McClellan, and makes affidavit in one volume octavo that he is a great military genius, after all. It should seem that this genius is of two varieties. The first finds the enemy, and beats him; the second finds him, and succeeds in getting away. General McClellan is now attempting a change of base in the face of public opinion, and is endeavoring to escape the consequences of having escaped from the Peninsula. For a year, his reputation flared upward like a rocket, culminated, burst, and now, after as long an interval, the burnt-out case comes down to us in this Report.

There is something ludicrously tragic, as our politics are managed, in seeing an Administration compelled to print a campaign document (for such is General McClellan's Report in a double sense) directed against itself. Yet in the present case, had it been possible to escape the penance, it had been unwise, for we think that no unprejudiced person can read the volume without a melancholy feeling that General McClel-

ian has foiled himself even more completely than the Rebels were able to do. He should have been more careful of his communications, for a line two hundred and forty-two pages long is likely to have its weak points. The volume before us is rather the plea of an advocate retained to defend the General's professional character and expound his political opinions, than the curt, colorless, unimpassioned statement of facts which is usually so refreshing in the official papers of military men, and has much more the air of being addressed to a jury than to the War Department at Washington. It is, in short, a letter to the people of the United States, under cover to the Secretary of War. General McClellan puts himself upon the country, and, after taking as much time to make up his mind as when he wearied and imperilled the nation in his camp on the Potomac, endeavors to win back from public opinion the victory which nothing but his own over-caution enabled the Rebels to snatch from him before Richmond. He cannot give us back our lost time or our squandered legions; but how nice it would be if we would give him back his reputation, which has never been of any great use to us, and yet would be so convenient for him! It was made for him, and accordingly fits him better than it would any one else. But it is altogether too late. There is no argument for the soldier but success, no wisdom for the man but to acknowledge defeat and be silent under it. The Great Captain on his sofa at Longwood may demonstrate how the Russian expedition might, could, would, and should have ended otherwise; but meanwhile its results are not to be reasoned with,—the Bourbons are at the Tuileries, and he at St. Helena. There is hardly anything that may not be made out of history by a skilful manipulator. Characters may be white-washed, bigotry made over into zeal, timidity into prudence, want of conviction into toleration, obstinacy into firmness; but the one thing that cannot be theorized out of existence, or made to look like anything else, is a lost campaign.

We have had other unsuccessful generals, but not one of them has ever been tempted into the indecorum of endeavoring to turn a defeat in the field to political advantage. Not one has thought of defending himself by imputations on his superiors. Early in the war General McDowell set an example of

silence under slanderous reproach, that won for him the sympathy and respect of whoever could be touched by self-reliant manliness. It is because General McClellan has seen fit to overstep the bounds of a proper official reserve, because, after more than a year for reflection, he has repeated charges of the grossest kind against those under whose orders he was acting, and all this from a political motive, that we think his Report deserving of more than usual attention. It will be no fault of his if he be not put in nomination for the Presidency, and accordingly it becomes worth our while to consider such evidences of character and capacity as his words and deeds afford us.

We believe that General McClellan has been ruined, like another general whose name began with Mac, by the "All hail hereafter" of certain political witches, who took his fortunes into their keeping after his campaign in Western Virginia. He had shown both ability and decision in handling a small force, and he might with experience have shown similar qualities in directing the operations of a great army, had not the promise of the Presidency made him responsible to other masters than military duty and unselfish patriotism. Thenceforward the soldier was lost in the politician. He thought more of the effect to be produced by his strategy on the voters behind him, than on the enemy in his front. What should have been his single object, — the suppression of the rebellion for the sake of the country, — was now divided with the desire of merely ending it by some plan that should be wholly of his own contrivance, and should redound solely to his own credit and advancement. He became giddy and presumptuous, and lost that sense of present realities, so essential to a commander, in contemplating the mirage that floated the White House before his eyes. At an age considerably beyond that of General Bonaparte when he had triumphantly closed his first Italian campaign, he was nicknamed "the *young* Napoleon," and from that time forth seems honestly to have endeavored, like Toepffer's Albert, to resemble the ideal portrait which had been drawn for him by those who put him forward as their stalking-horse. And it must be admitted that these last managed matters cleverly, if a little coarsely. They went to work deliberately to Barnum-

ize their prospective candidate. No *prima donna* was ever more thoroughly exploited by her Hebrew *impresario*. The papers swarmed with anecdotes, incidents, sayings. Nothing was too unimportant, and the new Commander-in-chief pulled on his boots by telegram from Maine to California, and picked his teeth by special despatch to the Associated Press. We had him warm for supper in *the very latest* with three exclamation-marks, and cold for breakfast in *last evening's telegraphic news* with none. Nothing but a patent pill was ever so suddenly famous.

We are far from blaming General McClellan for all this. He probably looked upon it as one of the inevitable discomforts of distinction in America. But we think that it insensibly affected his judgment, led him to regard himself as the representative of certain opinions, rather than as a general whose whole duty was limited to the army under his command, and brought him at last to a temper of mind most unfortunate for the public interests, in which he could believe the administration personally hostile to himself because opposed to the political principles of those who wished to profit by his "availability." It was only natural, too, that he should gradually come to think himself what his partisans constantly affirmed that he was,—the sole depositary of the country's destiny. We form our judgment of General McClellan solely from his own Report; we believe him to be honest in his opinions, and patriotic so far as those opinions will allow him to be; we know him to be capable of attaching those about him in a warm personal friendship, and we reject with the contempt they deserve the imputations on his courage and his military honor; but at the same time we consider him a man like other men, with a head liable to be turned by a fame too easily won. His great misfortune was that he began his first important campaign with a reputation to save instead of to earn, so that he was hampered by the crowning disadvantage of age in a general without the experience which might neutralize it. Nay, what was still worse, he had two reputations to keep from damage, the one as soldier, the other as politician.

He seems very early to have misapprehended the true relation in which he stood to the government. By the operation

of natural causes, as politicians would call them, he had become heir presumptive to the chair of state, and felt called on to exert an influence on the policy of the war, or at least to express an opinion that might go upon record for future convenience. He plunged into that Dismal Swamp of constitutional hermeneutics, in which the wheels of government were stalled at the outbreak of our rebellion, and from which every untrained explorer rises with a mouth too full of mud to be intelligible to Christian men. He appears to have thought it within the sphere of his duty to take charge of the statesmanship of the President no less than of the movements of the army, nor was it long before there were unmistakable symptoms that he began to consider himself quite as much the chief of an opposition who could dictate terms, as the military subordinate who was to obey orders. Whatever might have been his capacity as a soldier, this divided allegiance could not fail of disastrous consequences to the public service, for no mistress exacts so jealously the entire devotion of her servants as war. A mind distracted with calculations of future political contingencies was not to be relied on in the conduct of movements which above all others demand the constant presence, the undivided energy, of all the faculties, and the concentration of every personal interest on the one object of immediate success. A general who is conscious that he has an army of one hundred and fifty thousand voters at his back, will be always weakened by those personal considerations which are the worst consequence of the elective system. General McClellan's motions were encumbered in every direction by a huge train of political baggage. This misconception of his own position, or rather his confounding the two characters of possible candidate and actual general, forced the growth of whatever egotism was latent in his nature. He began ere long to look at everything from a personal point of view, to judge men and measures by their presumed relation to his own interests, and at length fairly persuaded himself that the inevitable results of his own want of initiative were due to the hostile combination against him of Mr. Lincoln, Mr. Stanton, and General Halleck. Regarding himself too much in considering the advantages of success, he regards others too little in awarding the responsibility of failure.



The intense self-consciousness of General McClellan, and a certain aim at effect for ulterior and unmilitary purposes, show themselves early. In October, 1861, addressing a memorial to Mr. Cameron, then Secretary of War, he does not forget the important constituency of Bunkum. "The unity of this nation," he says, "the preservation of our institutions, are so dear to me, that I have willingly sacrificed my private happiness with the single object of doing my duty to my country. When the task is accomplished, I shall be glad to retire to the obscurity from which events have drawn me. Whatever the determination of the government may be, I will do the best I can with the Army of the Potomac, and will share its fate, whatever may be the task imposed upon me." Not to speak of taste, the utter blindness to the true relations of things shown in such language is startling. What sacrifice had General McClellan made which had not been equally made by every one of the hundred and fifty thousand men of his army? Educated at the expense of the country, his services were a debt due on demand. And what was the sacrifice of which a soldier speaks so pathetically? To be raised from the management of a railway to one of the most conspicuous and inspiring positions of modern times, to an opportunity such as comes rarely to any man, and then only as the reward of transcendent ability transcendently displayed! To step from a captaincy of engineers to the command in chief of a great nation on fire with angry enthusiasm, spendthrift of men, money, devotion, to be the chosen champion of order, freedom, and civilization, — this is indeed a sacrifice such as few men have been called upon to make by their native land! And of what is General McClellan thinking when he talks of returning to obscurity? Of what are men commonly thinking when they talk thus? The newspapers would soon grow rich, if everybody should take to advertising what he did not want. And, moreover, to what kind of obscurity can a successful general return? An obscurity made up of the gratitude and admiration of his countrymen, a strange obscurity of glory! Nor is this the only occasion on which the General speaks of his willingness to share the fate of his army. What corporal could do less? No man thoroughly in earnest, and with the fate of his country in his

hands and no thought but of that, could have any place in his mind for such footlight phrases as these.

General McClellan's theory from the first seems to have been, that a large army would make a great general, though all history shows that the genius, decision, and confidence of a leader are the most powerful reinforcement of the troops under his command, and that an able captain makes a small army powerful by recruiting it with his own vigor and enthusiasm. From the time of his taking the command till his removal, he was constantly asking for more men, constantly receiving them, and constantly unable to begin anything with them after he got them. He could not move without one hundred and fifty thousand pairs of legs, and when his force had long reached that number, the President was obliged by the overtaxed impatience of the country to *pry* him up from his encampment on the Potomac with a special order. What the army really needed was an addition of one man, and that at the head of it; for a general, like an orator, must be moved himself before he can move others. The larger his army, the more helpless was General McClellan. Like the magician's *famulus*, who rashly undertook to play the part of master, and who could evoke powers that he could not control, he was swamped in his own supplies. With every reinforcement sent him on the Peninsula, his estimate of the numbers opposed to him increased. His own imagination faced him in superior numbers at every turn. Since Don Quixote's enumeration of the armies of the Emperor Alifanfaron and King Pentapolin of the Naked Arm, there has been nothing like our General's vision of the Rebel forces, with their ever-lengthening list of leaders, gathered for the defence of Richmond. His anxiety swells their muster-roll at last to two hundred thousand. We say his anxiety, for no man of ordinary judgment can believe that with that number of men the Rebel leaders would not have divided their forces, with one army occupying General McClellan, while they attempted the capital he had left uncovered with the other.

The first plan proposed by General McClellan covered operations extending from Virginia to Texas. With a main army of two hundred and seventy-three thousand he proposes, "not

only to drive the enemy out of Virginia and occupy Richmond, but to occupy Charleston, Savannah, Montgomery, Pensacola, Mobile, and New Orleans; in other words, to move into the heart of the enemy's country and crush the rebellion in its very heart." We do not say that General McClellan's ambition to be the one man who should crush the rebellion was an unworthy one, but that his theory that this was possible, and in the way he proposed, shows him better fitted to state the abstract problems than to apprehend the complex details of their solution when they lie before him as practical difficulties. For when we consider the necessary detachments from this force to guard his communications through an enemy's country, as he wishes the President to do, in order to justify the largeness of the force required, we cannot help asking how soon the army for active operations would be reduced to a hundred and fifty thousand. And how long would a general be in reaching New Orleans, if he is six months in making up his mind to advance with an army of that strength on the insignificant fortifications of Manassas, manned, according to the best information, with forty thousand troops? At the same time General McClellan assigns twenty thousand as a force adequate for opening the Mississippi. This plan, to be sure, was soon abandoned, but it is an illustration of the want of precision and forethought which characterizes the mind of its author. A man so vague in his conceptions is apt to be timid in action, for the same haziness of mind may, according to circumstances, either soften and obscure the objects of thought, or make them loom with purely fantastic exaggeration. There is a vast difference between clearness of head on demand, and the power of framing abstract schemes of action, beautiful in their correctness of outline and apparent simplicity. It is a perception of this truth, we believe, which leads practical men always to suspect plans supported by statistics too exquisitely conclusive.

It was on precisely such a specious basis of definite misinformation that General McClellan's next proposal for the campaign by way of the Peninsula rested, — precise facts before he sets out turning to something like precise no-facts when he gets there, — beautiful completeness of conception ending in hesita-

tion, confusion, and failure. Before starting, "the roads are passable at all seasons of the year, the country much more favorable for offensive operations than that in front of Washington, much more level, the woods less dense, the soil more sandy." (p. 47.) After arriving, we find "the roads impassable," "very dense and extensive forests, the clearings being small and few"; and "the comparative flatness of the country and the alertness of the enemy, everywhere in force, rendered thorough reconnoissances slow, dangerous, and difficult." (p. 79.) General McClellan's mental constitution would seem to be one of those, easily elated and easily depressed, that exaggerate distant advantages and dangers near at hand,—minds stronger in conception than perception, and accordingly, as such always are, wanting that faculty of swift decision which, catching inspiration from danger, makes opportunity success. Add to this, a kind of adhesiveness (we can hardly call it obstinacy or pertinacity) of temper, which can make no allowance for change of circumstances, and we think we have a tolerably clear notion of the causes of General McClellan's disasters. He can compose a good campaign beforehand, but he cannot improvise one out of the events of the moment, as is the wont of great generals. Occasion seldom offers her forelock twice to the grasp of the same man, and yet General McClellan, by the admission of the Rebels themselves, had Richmond at his mercy more than once.

He seems to attribute his misfortunes mainly to the withdrawal of General McDowell's division, and its consequent failure to co-operate with his own forces. But the fact is patent that the campaign was lost by his sitting down in front of Yorktown, and wasting a whole month in a series of approaches whose scientific propriety would have delighted Uncle Toby, to reduce a garrison of eight thousand men. Without that delay, which gave the Rebels time to send Jackson into the Shenandoah valley, General McDowell's army would have been enabled to come to his assistance. General McClellan, it is true, complains that it was not sent round by water, as he wished; but even if it had been, it could only have been an addition of helplessness to an army already too unwieldy for its commander; for he really made the Rebel force double his own

(as he always fancied it) by never bringing more than a quarter of his army into action at once. Yet during the whole campaign he was calling for more men, and getting them, till his force reached the highest limit he himself had ever set. When every available man, and more, had been sent him, he writes from Harrison's Bar to Mr. Stanton, "To accomplish the great task of capturing Richmond and putting an end to this rebellion, reinforcements should be sent to me *rather much over than less than one hundred thousand men.*" This letter General McClellan has not seen fit to include in his Report. Was the government to be blamed for pouring no more water into a sieve like this?

It certainly was a great mistake on Mr. Lincoln's part to order General McDowell off on a wild-goose chase after Jackson. The co-operation of this force might have enabled General McClellan even then to retrieve his campaign, and we do not in the least blame him for feeling bitterly the disappointment of wanting it. But it seems to us that it was mainly his own fault that there was anything to retrieve, and the true occasion to recover his lost ground was offered him after his bloody repulse of the enemy at Malvern Hill, though he did not turn it to account. For his retreat we think he would deserve all credit, had he not been under the necessity of making it. It was conducted with great judgment and ability, and we do not love that partisan narrowness of mind that would grudge him the praise so fairly earned. But at the same time it is not ungenerous to say, that the obstinate valor shown by his army under all the depression of a backward movement, while it proves how much General McClellan had done to make it an effective force, makes us regret all the more that he should have wanted the decision to try its quality under the inspiration of attack. It is impossible that the spirit of the army should not have been affected by the doubt and indecision of their general. They fought nobly, but they were always on the defensive. Had General McClellan put them at once on the aggressive, we believe his campaign would have been a triumphant one. With truly great generals resolve is instinctive, a deduction from premises supplied by the eye, not the memory, and men find out the science of their achieve-

ments afterwards, like the mathematical law in the Greek column. The stiffness rather than firmness of mind, the surrender of all spontaneous action in the strait-waistcoat of a preconceived plan, to which we have before alluded, unfitted him for that rapid change of combinations on the great chess-board of battle which enabled General Rosecrans at Murfreesboro to turn defeat into victory, an achievement without parallel in the history of the war.

General McClellan seems to have considered the President too careful of the safety of the capital; but he should measure the value of Washington by what he himself thought of the importance of taking Richmond. That, no doubt, would be a great advantage, but the loss of a recognized seat of government, with its diplomatic and other traditions, would have been of vastly more fatal consequence to us than the capture of their provisional perch in Virginia would have been to the Rebel authorities. It would have brought foreign recognition to the Rebels, and thrown Maryland certainly, and probably Kentucky, into the scale against us. So long as we held Washington, we had on our side the two powerful sentiments of permanence and tradition, some insensible portions of which the Rebels were winning from us with every day of repose allowed them by General McClellan. It was a clear sense of this that both excited and justified the impatience of the people, who saw that the insurrection was gaining the coherence and prestige of an established power,—an element of much strength at home and abroad. That this popular instinct was not at fault, we have the witness of General Kirby Smith, who told Colonel Fremantle “that McClellan might probably have destroyed the Southern army with the greatest ease during the first winter, and without much risk to himself, as the Southerners were so much over-elated by their easy triumph at Manassas, and their army had dwindled away.”

We have said that General McClellan's volume is rather a plea in abatement of judgment than a report. It was perfectly proper that he should endeavor to put everything in its true light, and he would be sure of the sympathy of all right-minded men in so doing; but an *ex parte* statement at once rouses and justifies adverse criticism. He has omitted many docu-

ments essential to the formation of a just opinion ; and it is only when we have read these also, in the Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War, that we feel the full weight of the cumulative evidence going to show the hearty support in men and confidence that he received from the Administration, and, when there were no more men to be sent, and confidence began to yield before irresistible facts, the prolonged forbearance with which he was still favored. Nothing can be kinder or more cordial than the despatches and letters both of the President and Mr. Stanton, down to the time when General McClellan wrote the following sentences at the end of an official communication addressed to the latter : " If I save this army now, I tell you plainly that I owe no thanks to you, or to any other persons in Washington. You have done your best to sacrifice this army." (28th June, 1862.) We shall seek no epithet to characterize language like this. All but the most bigoted partisans will qualify it as it deserves. We have here a glaring example of that warping of good sense and good feeling which the consciousness of having a political stake at risk will produce in a gallant soldier and a courteous gentleman. Can General McClellan, after a year to grow cool in, either himself believe, or expect any one else to believe, that the President and the Secretary of War would " do their best to sacrifice " an army of a hundred and fifty thousand brave men, in order to lessen his possible chances as a candidate for the Presidency ? It was of vastly more importance to them than to him that he should succeed. The dignified good temper of Mr. Lincoln's answer to this wanton insult does him honor. " I have not said you were ungenerous for saying you needed reinforcements ; I thought you were ungenerous in assuming that I did not send them as fast as I could. I feel any misfortune to you and your army quite as keenly as you feel it yourself." Mr. Stanton could only be silent ; and whatever criticisms may be made on some traits of his character, he is quite safe in leaving the rebuke of such an imputation to whoever feels that earnestness, devotion, and unflagging purpose are high qualities in a public officer.

If General McClellan had been as prompt in attacking the enemy as he showed himself in this assault on his superiors,

we think his campaign in the Peninsula would have ended more satisfactorily. We have no doubt that he would conduct a siege or a defence with all the science and all the proprieties of warfare, but we think he has proved himself singularly wanting in the qualities which distinguish the natural leaders of men. He had every theoretic qualification, but no ardor, no leap, no inspiration. A defensive general is an earthen redoubt, not an ensign to rally enthusiasm and inspire devotion. Caution will never make an army, though it may sometimes save one. We think General McClellan reduced the efficiency and lowered the tone of his soldiers by his six months' dose of prudence. With every day he gave the enemy, he lessened his chances of success, and added months to the duration of the war. He never knew how to find opportunity, much less to make it. He was an accomplished soldier, but lacked that downright common-sense which is only another name for genius with its coat off for actual work in hand.

Were General McClellan's Report nothing more than a report, were the General himself nothing more than an officer endeavoring to palliate a failure, we should not have felt called on to notice his plea, unless to add publicity to any new facts he might be able to bring forward. But the Report is a political manifesto, and not only that, but an attack on the Administration which appointed him to the command, supported him with all its resources, and whose only fault it was not sooner to discover his incapacity to conduct aggressive movements. General McClellan is a candidate for the Presidency, and as he has had no opportunity to show his capacity in any civil function, his claim must rest on one of two grounds,—either the ability he has shown as a general, or the specific principles of policy he is supposed to represent. Whatever may be the success of our operations in the field, our Chief Magistracy for the next four years will demand a person of great experience and ability. Questions cannot fail to arise taxing prudence of the longest forecast and decision of the firmest quality. How far is General McClellan likely to fulfil these conditions? What are the qualities of mind of which both his career and his Report give the most irrefragable evidence?

General McClellan's mind seems to be equally incapable of



appreciating the value of time as the material of action, and its power in changing the relations of facts, and thus modifying the basis of opinion. He is a good maker of almanacs, but no good judge of the weather. Judging by the political counsel which he more than once felt called upon to offer the President, and which, as he has included it in his Report, we must presume to represent his present opinions, he does not seem even yet to appreciate the fact, that this is not a war between two nations, but an attempt at revolution within ourselves, which can be adequately met only by revolutionary measures. And yet, if he were at this moment elevated to the conduct of our affairs, he would find himself controlled by the same necessities which have guided Mr. Lincoln, and must either adopt his measures, or submit to a peace dictated by the South. No side issue as to *how* the war shall be conducted is any longer possible. The naked question is one of war or submission, for compromise means surrender; and if the choice be war, we cannot afford to give the enemy fifty in the game, by standing upon scruples which he would be the last to appreciate or to act upon. It is one of the most terrible features of war, that it must be inexorable by its very nature.

Great statesmanship and great generalship have been more than once shown by the same man, and naturally enough, because they both result from the same qualities of mind, an instant apprehension of the demand of the moment, and a self-confidence that can as instantly meet it, so that every energy of the man is gathered to one intense focus. It is the faculty of being a present man, instead of a prospective one; of being ready, instead of getting ready. Though we think great injustice has been done by the public to General McClellan's really high merits as an officer, yet it seems to us that those very merits show precisely the character of intellect to unfit him for the task just now demanded of a statesman. His capacity for organization may be conspicuous; but, be it what it may, it is one thing to bring order out of the confusion of mere inexperience, and quite another to retrieve it from a chaos of elements mutually hostile, which is the problem sure to present itself to the next administration. This will constantly require precisely that judgment on the nail, and not to be drawn for at three days' sight, of which General McClellan has shown least.

Is our path to be so smooth for the next four years, that a man whose leading characteristic is an exaggeration of difficulties is likely to be our surest guide? If the war is still to be carried on, and surely the nation has shown no symptoms of slackening in its purpose, what modifications of it would General McClellan introduce? The only information that is vouchsafed us is, that he is to be the "conservative" candidate, a phrase that may mean too little or too much. As well as we can understand it, it is the convenient formula by which to express the average want of opinions of all who are out of place, out of humor, or dislike the dust which blinds and chokes whoever is behind the times. Sometimes it is used as the rallying-cry of an amiable class of men, who still believe, in a vague sort of way, that the rebels can be conciliated by offering them a ruler more *comme il faut* than Mr. Lincoln, a country where a flatboatman may rise to the top, by virtue of mere manhood, being hardly the place for people of truly refined sensibilities. Or does it really mean nothing more nor less than that we are to try and put slavery back again where it was before, (only that it is not quite convenient just now to say so,) on the theory that teleologically the pot of ointment was made to conserve the dead fly?

In the providence of God the first thoughtless enthusiasm of the nation has settled to deep purpose, their anger has been purified by trial into a conviction of duty, and they are face to face with one of those rare occasions where duty and advantage are identical. The man who is fit for the office of President in these times should be one who knows how to advance, an art which General McClellan has never learned. He must be one who comprehends that three years of war have made vast changes in the relative values of things. He must be one who feels to the very marrow of his bones that this is a war, not to conserve the forms, but the essence, of free institutions. He must be willing to sacrifice everything to the single consideration of success, because success means truth and honor, to use every means, though they may alarm the fears of men who are loyal with a reservation, or shock the prejudices of would-be traitors. No middle course is safe in troubled times, and the only way to escape the dangers of revolution is by directing its forces and giving it useful work to do.